

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 OES-06 AGR-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05

CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 OMB-01 FEA-01 /119 W
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R 291216Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7552

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 07459

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, ETRD, EAGR, BE

SUBJECT: U.S. SAFEGUARDS PROPOSAL IN MTN

REF: GENEVA 5882

1. IN THE COURSE OF A CALL ON DEHENNIN, DIRECTION GENERALE DES RELATIONS ECONOMIQUES EXTERIEURES, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO DISCUSS DEPARTMENT VIEWS ON FOLLOW-UP ON JULY CIEC MEETING, HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD ATTENDED THE GENEVA MTN MEETING AT WHICH THE UNITED STATES PRESENTED ITS POSITION ON SAFEGUARDS. DEHENNIN SAID THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE US PROPOSAL AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT MOVE FORWARD, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STILL SOME ASPECTS WHICH APPEAR TROUBLESOME TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. BELGIUM IS CONCERNED WITH THE US SUGGESTION IN THE SAFEGUARDS PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS, SINCE THIS OR SIMILAR PUBLIC PROCEDURES WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO EFFECT IN BELGIUM. IN ADDITION, BELGIUM HAS SOME QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE SAFEGUARDS SHALL BE EMBODIED IN A CODE OR BECOME MODIFIED GATT ARTICLE 19. DEHENNIN ALSO NOTED THAT THE QUESTION OF SELECTIVE APPLICATION OF THE SAFEGUARDS WAS A PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT BELGIUM IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE "UNREASONABLE" DEMANDS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHO WERE ASKING FOR BLANKET EXEMPTION FROM THE PROPOSED SAFEGUARDS. HE SAID THAT BELGIUM COULD NOT AGREE TO SWEEPING EXEMPTIONS AND THAT A FORMULA ON DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DEVISE. ACCORDING TO DEHENNIN THE US PROPOSALS ON SELECTIVITY CRITERIA WERE NOT FULLY DEFINED AT THE GENEVA MEETING AND THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTING FURTHER REFINEMENTS OF THE US PROPOSALS. DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, DEHINNIN EMPLASIZED HIS GOVERNMENT'S FAVORABLE VIEW OF THE US SAFEGUARDS PROPOSALS AND URGED THAT WE CONTINUE TO PUSH THEM IN GENEVA.

3. AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, DEHENNIN RAISED THE CONTINUING PROBLEM OF THE EC DISAGREEMENT WITH THE US ON THE TREATMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN THE MTN. HE SAID THAT IN THE EC 113 COMMITTEE THE FRENCH WERE HOLDING UP EVERYTHING IN THE MTN OF BASIC
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SIGNIFICANCE, INCLUDING THE TREATMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ON THE "PRETEXT" THAT FOLLOWING THE US ELECTIONS THERE MIGHT BE A SOFTENING OF THE US POSITION ON AGRICULTURE. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY WAS ARGUING AGAINST ANY EXPECTATION OF MAJOR CHANGES IN THE US POSITION ON AGRICULTURE, EVEN IF THERE WERE A CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATION. DEHENNIN, BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE IN WASHINGTON SAID HE WAS CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REPRESENTATION FROM AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN THE US CONGRESS.

HIS VIEW ON THE CONTINUITY OF US POLICY ON TRADE LIBERALIZATION, HOWEVER, WAS BEING QUESTIONED, ESPECIALLY BY THE FRENCH, WHO HAVE SAID THAT THE US DID NOT PURSUE THE MTN ISSUE AT THE PUERTO RICO SUMMIT, ALTHOUGH WE HAD PRESSED THE SUBJECT VIGOROUSLY AT THE RAMBOUILLET SUMMIT. THE FRENCH WERE USING THIS ARGUMENT TO SOW DOUBTS ABOUT THE CONTINUITY OF US DEDICATION TO THE MTN. SINCE, AS DEHENNIN OBSERVED, BELGIUM DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE PUERTO RICO SUMMIT, HE COULD NOT REFUTE FRANCE ON THIS POINT.

4. EMBASSY OFFICER STRONGLY SUPPORTED DEHENNIN ON CONTINUITY OF BASIC US POSITIONS ON TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ACHIEVING MTN GOALS. EMBASSY OFFICER NOTED CONTINUED ACTIVE US ROLE ON MTN IN SUCH FORA AS GATT AND THE RECENTLY COMPLETED OECD MINISTERIAL MEETING ATTENDED BY SENIOR US OFFICIALS.

5. DEHENNIN SAID THAT HE EXPECTED NO FURTHER PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY POSITIONS ON MTN UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER SINCE THE COMMISSION WAS TAKING OFF THE ENTIRE MONTH OF AUGUST AND COULD NOT RESUME WORK UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER. HE WAS PERSUADED THAT THE FRENCH WOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD UP FORWARD MOTION ON POSITIONS ON MTN IN THE 113 COMMITTEE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE US ELECTIONS. RENNER

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